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General Debate 3 (a): Actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development at the global, regional and national levels

3 (b): Sustainable cities, human mobility and international migration

Statement submitted by Imam Ali's Popular Students Relief Society, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council[2]

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[1] E/CN.9/2018/1.
[2] The present statement is issued without formal editing.

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Statement

There are different types of migration, such as migration from villages to cities and major urban agglomerations and migration from one country to another. From another perspective, migration can be forced or voluntary.

In this statement, the focus is placed on forced migration, its roots and consequences.

Migration from villages to small cities and large urban agglomerations takes place for different reasons, such as change in the ecosystem, climate change, poverty, lack of jobs, and lack of welfare infrastructures. One of the consequences of such migration can be increased marginalization of the population in urban areas which can lead, in turn, to complex problems such as addiction, child labour, informal economy, crime and insecurity.

Macro-economic, political and social policies that focus on rural development and the development of disadvantaged areas, can reduce migration from such areas. Developing civil and socially-oriented activities in areas considered as the sources of migration can also reduce migration.

As a civil society, Imam Ali's Society has been active both in areas at the outskirts of cities and in border towns and villages (in provinces such as Sistan Baluchestan, Kurdestan, Khouzestan, Ilam, Hormozgan and Kermanshah) for more than two decades.

Another form of forced migration is relocation from one country to another due to war and internal conflicts. Forced migrants are often threatened by drowning, abduction, sexual abuse, and organ-smuggling gangs.

Imam Ali's Popular Student Relief Society works with people from Afghanistan who emigrated to Iran due to instability and unsafe living conditions in Afghanistan, with Syrian refugees living in camps in Iraq, and with immigrants of Myanmar's Rohingya who have escaped political turmoil in Myanmar. Many of these migrants and refugees suffered from deprivation, and they did not have any resources and were at risk to suffer also in the countries of destination.

During the recent political crisis in Myanmar, about one million Rohingya were forced to migrate to Bangladesh. Some statistical sources indicate that almost 60 per cent of these refugees are children who are deprived of appropriate nutrition, education, hygiene, and many other services. They have suffered psychologically, due to the experiences suffered when fleeing persecution. Children suffer abuse in many ways.

In our point of view, development as a general concept is not uniformly achieved within a region. Levels of development often differ from one region to another leading to migration from the less to more developed regions which can negatively impact conditions in both origin and destination countries.

Imam Ali's Society is seeking development and peace for all regardless of borders. This civil society organization provides opportunities for those living along the borders of Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, and Pakistan. The organization is assisting refugees to improve their living conditions.

Imam Ali's Society has also engaged in some activities in Iraq and Syria for support in refugee camps and plans to assist Rohingya who are homeless. The organization hopes that by expanding these humanitarian activities, forced migration in these areas will decrease in the future.